

How to Honor the Lives of Others

Most unchurched Americans know the Bible has something in it called the Ten Commandments, and if they know any of the Ten Commandments, they know this one: “Do not murder” (Ex. 20:13). Let me explain what that commandment means:

Do. Not. Murder.

It means what it says! I’m fairly confident that most of you agree that death is tragic. Your actions prove that because you have never taken the



life of another. So far, so good. But avoiding the act of murder is not the sum total of what the command “Do not murder” entails.

Let me state the heart of this command in a positive way: Honor life. Honor involves more than our physical actions; honor begins in the heart. I can hate someone without ever going so far as murder, but my hate does not honor the person.

Jesus said:

“You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Do not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be subject to hellfire” (Matt. 5:21-22).

Honoring life is a matter of the heart.

At the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry, the people were familiar with the saying: “Don’t do to others

what you don’t want done to you.” We keep that ancient proverb when we don’t murder, but Jesus turned that proverb upside-down and stated it positively:

“Whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them” (Matt. 7:12).

We don’t just want others not to kill us; we want their respect. We want their actions toward us to benefit us. We even want them to love us. And that is exactly what Jesus is calling us to do. To honor life is to treat them the best way we can. We don’t just avoid harm against them; we seek their best—even when they are not seeking our best. Let me quote Jesus one more time:

“Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27-28).

As followers of Christ, we are to set the example of how to honor the lives of anyone and everyone. Don’t just avoid doing harm. Step in to:

- Treat them as you want to be treated.
- Honor them as you want to be honored.
- Loved them as you want to be loved.

Jesus did that for us. And we are to do no less.

